

DAILY COVID-19 Misinformation and Scam Report

Date: 04/14/2020

Executive Summary

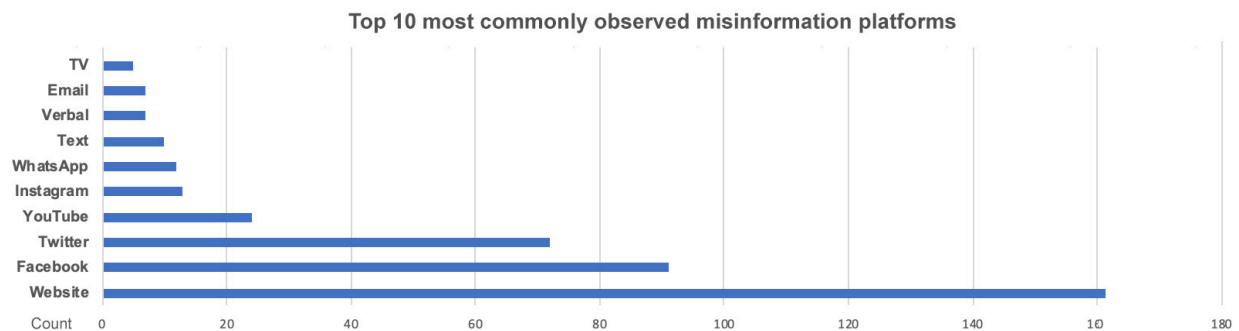
As of April 14, 2020, 336 entries have been added to the COVID-19 misinformation and scams database. So far, no reports by Arkansans have been received. Disinformation is quickly spreading through social media and scams related to the stimulus checks are of concern. Networks of alternative news websites and YouTube channels are appearing to be mainstream news outlets, but in fact are pushing misleading information and conspiracy theories. The content is viewed by millions on YouTube and shared through social media channels. In order to increase awareness of misleading “news” outlets and stay informed about scams, the public can be advised by the Attorney General’s office where to find current information, disregard speculation, and follow official accounts.

Key Insights

As stimulus checks are being sent out, the claim that these payments will be later taxed is currently spreading through social media platforms. These claims spread from one platform to another. For instance, a TikTok video is shared on Twitter.

Social media platforms, in particular Facebook groups, have been sharing COVID-19 related disinformation about vaccines. Claims that COVID-19 vaccines have been killing people in Africa and will be used to control or depopulate the world’s population continue to circulate online. Links to bogus news websites and YouTube channels that spread this misinformation is heavily shared in social media.

Overall, the top sources being used to spread COVID-19 misinformation are: Websites, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.



Note: Social media platforms are used to spread the messaging from website and links to misinformation articles and posts.

Between April 10 and April 14, 139 users visited the website, 121 of these were first-time visitors. Out of these users, 46% were from Arkansas. The top three locations users originated from are Little Rock (49%), North Little Rock (14%), and Conway (6%). Other locations include Benton, Fayetteville, Jonesboro, Bella Vista, Bentonville, Cabot, De Queen, England, Lonoke, Mountain Home, Russellville, Vilonia and Centerton. Two users did not have their specific location set.

Top three misinformation themes – NO CHANGE.

- 5G causes coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Fake products and/or techniques to prevent and/or kill coronavirus
- Conspiracy theories claiming that the government is using the coronavirus to control citizens and/or is a fake crisis used to advance government's planned agendas.

Recommendations - No change from previous report.